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UNCLAS PRAGUE 001614

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: CZECH NGO WILL SEEK USG SUPPORT FOR PLAN TO EXPAND
DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE IN MIDDLE EAST

REF: A. PRAGUE 01399

[1](#)B. PRAGUE 01198

[1](#)1. (U) Poloffs met with Simon Panek, Director of Czech NGO People in Need (PIN), and Igor Blazevic, head of PIN,s Human Rights Section, to discuss PIN,s ongoing efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East (ref A.). Panek said PIN began training Iraqi civil society in August 2005 at a center located in Amman, Jordan, with the working title, The Democracy and Transition Center (ref B.). This Center trains carefully selected Iraqi journalists on their role in transforming society, and on professional ethics. It also helps Iraqi NGOs develop management skills, and provides training for the trainers. In 2006, PIN plans to expand the training program at the Center to include Iraqi civil servants. In 2007, PIN hopes to expand the focus of the Center to include other countries in the region, such as Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.

[1](#)2. (U) The Czech MFA has strongly supported the Center by providing 75 percent of the funding through 2006; the remaining 25 percent came from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). PIN anticipates it will require additional funding for the proposed expansion of the Center in 2007, and informed Poloffs that PIN intends to formally apply for US financial support.

[1](#)3. (U) Background. PIN is the largest partner/implementing NGO for the Czech MFA development assistance program. PIN helps countries striving to transform from authoritarian regimes to democracies by relying on experiences from the Czech transformation after the fall of communism in 1989. PIN is well-known and respected in Central Europe, and coordinates its efforts with NGOs in other Visegrad countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Poland). PIN is the largest domestic NGO in Central Europe with over 500 employees in 16 different offices (100 in the Czech Republic and 400 worldwide). In addition to democracy promotion, PIN,s activities range from crisis response to reconstruction, and it recently became involved in development projects. PIN is registered as an international PVO and aspires to funding from USAID. End background.

[1](#)4. (U) Comment. PIN programs support the USG policy of promoting democracy in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, Eastern Europe (including Belarus), and Cuba. PIN,s objective and comparative advantage is the "export of transitional know how." Post therefore encourages favorable USG support for PIN's plans to expand its Democracy and Transition Center in 2007 to include training for leaders from Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine.

CABANISS